

As abortion battle shifts, Planned Parenthood to boost regional affiliate funds, cut national staff

May 24 2023, by GEOFF MULVIHILL and THALIA BEATY



A welcome sign hangs outside a Planned Parenthood branch on May 16, 2023, in Pasadena, Calif. Planned Parenthood is shifting funding to its state affiliates and cutting national office staff to reflect a changed landscape in both how abortion is provided and how battles over access are playing out. The group, a major provider of abortion and other health services and also an advocate for abortion access, told its staff on Monday, May 22, 2023, that layoff notices would go out

in June and provided The Associated Press with an overview Tuesday. Credit: AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File

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The group, a major provider of abortion and other [health services](#) and also an advocate for abortion access, told its staff on Monday that layoff notices would go out in June. It provided The Associated Press with an overview Tuesday.

The changes are to kick in on July 1, just over a year after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade, the 1973 decision that provided a right to abortion across the country. Since then, most Republican-controlled states have banned or restricted abortion, and most Democrat-controlled states have made moves to protect access.

"We are in a moment when I just believe that Planned Parenthood needs to change, too," said Alexis McGill Johnson, president and CEO of the two arms of the organization: the political Planned Parenthood Action Fund and the network for local service providers, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

She said the changes do not reflect financial struggles for the organization—just priorities that need to change.

Currently, bans on abortion at all stages of pregnancy are in effect in 14 states. Planned Parenthood affiliates have sued several states over their restrictions.



A sign stands outside Planned Parenthood of Utah on June 28, 2022, in Salt Lake City. Planned Parenthood is shifting funding to its state affiliates and cutting national office staff to reflect a changed landscape in both how abortion is provided and how battles over access are playing out. The group, a major provider of abortion and other health services and also an advocate for abortion access, told its staff on Monday, May 22, 2023, that layoff notices would go out in June and provided The Associated Press with an overview Tuesday. Credit: AP Photo/Rick Bowmer, File

The organization plans to increase funding for non-abortion health services in states with bans. Planned Parenthood's services include testing for sexually transmitted infections, providing contraception, cancer screenings and gender-affirming care. The group also plans to

increase funding in places where abortion remains legal in order to help serve patients who travel from states with restrictions.

To fund the changes, McGill Johnson said that 10% to 15% of the group's 725 to 750 employees—possibly around 100—face layoffs in June.

Service Employees International Union locals that represent Planned Parenthood workers criticized the layoffs. "We have served PPFA during the toughest times for abortion access," they said in a statement. "We deserve more than empty claims of equity and of supporting our futures."

In Ohio, a court has blocked enforcement of a ban on abortion after cardiac activity can be detected—generally about six weeks and before many women know they are pregnant. For now, the state has an influx of abortion patients from neighboring Kentucky and West Virginia and other states with bans. But a [court ruling](#) could bring a strict ban to the state.

More funding from the national Planned Parenthood will help, said Kersha Deibel, president and CEO of Cincinnati-based Planned Parenthood Southwest Ohio Region. "No matter what happens, we are continuing to build power and making plans to protect and support patients who need access to care," she said.



Abortion protesters attempt to hand out literature at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Indianapolis, on Aug. 16, 2019. Planned Parenthood is shifting funding to its state affiliates and cutting national office staff to reflect a changed landscape in both how abortion is provided and how battles over access are playing out. The group, a major provider of abortion and other health services and also an advocate for abortion access, told its staff on Monday, May 22, 2023, that layoff notices would go out in June and provided The Associated Press with an overview Tuesday. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Conroy, File

The national group plans to improve technology for electronic medical record sharing and telehealth. It will also launch an initiative to better serve Black patients, particularly in the South and Midwest. That element is in a multi-year, \$50 million effort that began more than a year ago and has so far focused mostly on the planning stages.

The group's political arm is looking to increase funding at the state level. Last year, six states had ballot measures that dealt with abortion, and the side that supported abortion access prevailed in all of them—even generally conservative states like Kansas and Kentucky. Abortion is expected to be on ballots elsewhere in coming years, including in Ohio this fall.

The New York-based group said the Black health equality initiative will cost \$15 million in the coming budget year and other elements will total close to \$70 million. Political spending on these initiatives will be added on top of those costs.

Also Tuesday, Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, a major anti-[abortion](#) group, announced it is working with Kellyanne Conway, a former adviser to President Donald Trump, to "get pro-life candidates on offense in the 2024 election cycle."

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